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ABSTRACT

This profile of the English language teaching situation in Mexico examines the role of English in society and in the educational system. It is noted that the extent to which English is used in Mexico is affected by the country's proximity to the United States. The educational system is described, with emphasis on English instruction which begins in secondary school. It is noted that the status of English is the most encouraging at the tertiary level. The composition of the teaching cadre is discussed as well as teacher qualifications, certification, and the problem of providing enough teachers for the ever increasing number of students. Also discussed are the availability of English language textbooks, English teaching in the private sector, the extent of British support for the teaching of English, U.S. support, and the status of current research. The concluding general statement provides a detailed outline of the strengths and weaknesses of the present English language teaching siuation. Appended is information on the status of English literature and British Council involvement in English literature programs. (AMH)

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THE BRITISH COUNCIL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIVISION

ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: MEXICO

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Date: March 1981

1. Role of English

1.1 The widespread activity of English language teaching and learning in Mexico, although Spanish is the country's official language, is to be seen not only at most levels of the formal school system but also in industry, commercial enterprises, government offices and agencies, binational centres, and many of the private language institutes which have flourished during the past few years in many parts of Mexico; but the number of English-language teachers in the Republic is uncertain. (The estimated number is between twenty thousand and twenty-five thousand.)

1.2 In the public sector in general English is badly taught: this has meant prosperity for the countless private language schools.

1.2.1 In many sections of the language-learning community British English is highly regarded and sought after - partly because it is generally better taught, partly because it offers a more politically acceptable language variety, and partly for purely snobbish reasons.

1.2.2 Bilingual (Spanish-English) schools in Mexico are numerous, but there are none in the public sector. In fact, Mexican law does not permit instruction exclusively in a foreign language, and many bilingual schools offer a double curriculum in Spanish and English.

1.2.3 Although English is rarely used as the medium of instruction in universities, it is becoming increasingly important in many areas of higher education, particularly in science and technology. At undergraduate and postgraduate levels a very large number of subject-textbooks and important research articles are available only in English, and many of Mexico's sixty-nine universities and forty-eight Regional Technological Institutes now have a Department of Foreign Languages where English represents a very high percentage of the courses offered.

1.3 The extent to which English is used in Mexico is greatly affected by the country's geographical situation and by its attitude to the United States, whose economic hold on the Republic (the USA accounts for over sixty per cent of Mexico's imports and exports) ensures a major role for English in commerce, including tourism, and international banking. Nevertheless there are important counterbalancing factors owing to increasingly strong feelings of national identity coupled with widespread resentment towards the United States, especially now that Mexico is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich nation. Also, though Mexicans need English, they admire French far more than Anglo-Saxon culture and are consequently more receptive to French than to English. Indeed the Mexican educational and legal systems are clearly based on French models. Significantly, the largest group of foreign-run language institutes in Mexico is under the auspices of the French government, with thirty-one centres and over thirty-four thousand students. All

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this results in the surprising situation in which, though English is widely taught and used, it is still relatively rare to meet people with a good working knowledge of the language - particularly outside the Federal District or far from the frontier with the United States.

1.3.1 There is an interesting tendency for more and more loanwords from English to be absorbed into Spanish and become part of common usage.

2. English within the Educational System

The Mexican education system is primarily characterised by dynamic and constant growth in the school population, curricular reform and, above all, organisational complexity, particularly at postsecondary level. Provision of basic schooling for children and adults alike is to be the main concern of the educational leadership in Mexico (largely the Ministry of Education (SEP)) for the foreseeable future. In addition to achieving greater efficiency in teaching methodologies, learning strategies and the overall organisation of education programmes, the authorities will have to make a breakthrough in the use of mass-media in order that even the goals of universal primary education may be realised. Similarly, responsibility for education will need to be dispersed more widely both at the local and at the state level. The present government has taken a major first step by appointing Ministry of Education delegates for each of the thirty-one states of Mexico. Ways must be found to reduce further the very strong hold the Federal Government has traditionally had over the funding, formulation and implementation of major decisions throughout the education system. SEP is at present responsible for the curricula of all primary and secondary schools as well as for teacher-training at those levels throughout the country and directly administers all Federal schools. (State and private schools have to be officially authorised or 'incorporated' by the educational authorities.) Although they are almost totally dependent on public financial support, the universities are administratively autonomous; they are also in charge of their preparatory schools (general education at the upper-middle level immediately prior to university entrance) and of their faculties, professional schools etc.

Secondary education, though still not compulsory, provides most children with their first formal contact with English. Foreign languages are part of the required curricula in all three years of government secondary schooling (Grades Seven to Nine after the six grades of basic education). Over three years, students devote about three hours a week to English or French. Ninety per cent of children are taught English, and outside the Federal District there is rarely even the possibility of learning French. This means that the largest single group of students involved in learning English in Mexico is to be found in the secondary schools, of which there are two main types: those for youths who enter under the age of fifteen; and the so-called 'schools for labourers' (adult secondary schools). The present priorities of SEP do not allow much attention to English language teaching at the adult secondary schools, the teaching of English to adults being very largely left to private language institutes. There are also vocational or technical secondary schools (ESTs) where English is taught on the same lines as in other secondary schools. The classes are very large - usually between forty and sixty students; the syllabus since 1975 has been structural, with emphasis on the oral, and organised according to performance objectives. The stated medial objective is the ability to 'understand what is read' and 'write and be understood', the terminal objective being rather vaguely expressed as 'communication'. Although considerable progress has been made in recent years, particularly in terms of encouraging active student participation,

the results of English language teaching in Mexico at secondary level remain far from satisfactory. Judged by the stated goal of providing students with English language, communication skills must be seen as an almost total failure. Some reasons for this unfortunate situation are: the absence of any clear statement of medium- or long-term aims for making English a more or less compulsory subject at this level, no one seeming to be sure, neither the teachers nor, in particular, the students, whether English is learnt for general educational reasons, to help students towards higher education, or for specifically vocational purposes; lack of certainty as to the type of syllabus which would be most suitable and what their main topic and language items should be; lack of properly trained teachers with an adequate command of English; and lack of satisfactory teaching conditions, materials and equipment. The fact that many teachers lack confidence in their English means that they tend to follow the textbooks word by word, unit by unit. The books used have to be approved by a national committee and printed in Mexico; there are at present some fifteen books on the approved list for the first year and ten for each of the other two years. Few of the books really provide teachers with the help they need, yet no changes are expected either in the syllabus or in the list of approved books before the new President and his government assume office in 1983. As educators and economists in Mexico look for ways to make secondary education available to more and more Mexicans, and as means are sought to reduce costs while expanding services, the viability of the foreign-language requirement at secondary level has been seriously questioned. Many feel that the requirement should be eliminated; at present it remains a big question-mark for the future of English language teaching in Mexico.

After completing secondary level, students who are able to go on to higher education normally spend a further three years either in a preparatory school attached to a particular university or institution or in one of the complex array of technical high schools which provide parallel vocationally oriented courses. In all these schools English is generally only compulsory in the first year (this is one of the main reasons why students entering universities, the Polytechnic Institute or the regional technological institutes are so badly prepared in the language). The often poor English teaching at secondary and higher secondary levels, plus the gap, frequently of two years, before the tertiary level proper is entered, means that few students have reached a level in English adequate for them to use it for their specialist studies when required, particularly in order to read the many books and articles readily available in the language. There are, however, a number of excellent departments of foreign languages where English is the principal language offered in universities and other institutions of higher education (general English courses and a wide range of courses in English for specific purposes, with particular emphasis on English for academic purposes (EAP) and reading comprehension). Most of the key institutions lie in and around the Federal District. (They are beginning to train teachers for provincial centres, but in general the provinces are desperately in need of help.)

Many of the major foreign language departments have a number of native English-speakers on their staff as well as an increasing number of Mexican teachers with MAs in Applied Linguistics gained either in the United Kingdom or in the United States. These departments tend more and more to conduct their own needs analysis and produce their own specially developed materials, which bear favourable comparison with any in the world. The principal departments are the following:

a. Centre for Foreign Languages (CELE) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). This is the leading foreign-language department in the country, with an excellent and highly trained staff.

It offers general English classes and ESP classes, produces ESP materials and courses for other university faculties, does a lot of pre-service and in-service teacher-training, and engages in a good deal of research in applied linguistics. It began the first MA in Applied Linguistics Programme in Mexico in November 1979.

b. At the Metropolitan University (UAM) there are three campuses, Xochimilco, Iztapalapa and Azcapatzalco, each of which has a Centre for Foreign Languages (SELEX). They are all engaged in providing ESP courses and producing ESP materials of a high standard. Applied linguistics research is also increasingly encouraged.

c. At the private Technological Institute of Monterrey (ITESM) the English Department offers general English as well as ESP courses and has produced particularly interesting largely self-access materials on reading for academic purposes.

d. The five professional schools called National Schools of Postgraduate Education (ENEPs), which are really decentralised bodies of the National University have language departments and are trying hard to develop suitable ESP programmes for their students as well as improving the qualifications and skills of their own English staff.

e. In addition, there are rapidly developing language departments in a number of the Regional Technological Institutes and such provincial universities as the University of Yucatan at Merida and the University of Veracruz at Xalapa.

In general, the picture at tertiary level is most encouraging, and there is a good chance that gradually the excellent work in the metropolitan area will spread outwards to provincial centres and downwards to the preparatory and secondary levels where it is so badly needed.

2.1 English is not taught at all at primary level in the public sector, but it is taught in the primary departments of the numerous American or British-style schools in the private sector. The number of private bi-lingual kindergartens is increasing.

2.2 State-set examinations are taken at the end of the secondary cycle. A pass in English or French is necessary for progress to the high-school level. Although before 1975 English was one of the subjects students failed most often, recent results have been much better. The failure rate at present is approximately ten per cent. Similarly, a pass in a foreign language is necessary to complete the Bachillerato (high-school leaving examination). In this way a pass in English - or another foreign language - is required for university entrance. Outside the state examination systems, the Cambridge First Certificate and Proficiency examinations, organised in Mexico by the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute, are very widely taken and increasingly recognised as a useful qualification in teaching and business.

2.3 and 2.4 <u>English as a formal requirement for advancement within the educational system and syllabuses.</u> See 2 (second paragraph)

2.5 There is very little provision for inspection in English language teaching at any level in Mexico, and there is no English language teaching expert in any position of influence at SEP. Some states have an education inspectorate, but one inspector is often responsible for all subjects at secondary level and in all probability will have no real knowledge of English or how to teach it. A few states have British-

trained English-language advisers, but their jobs are more to do with teacher-training than with looking at what happens in the classroom.

2.6 English for specific purposes at secondary level is in its infancy. Although there is a growing awareness of the need for more specialised English courses, particularly in vocational and technical schools, there are not nearly enough trained teachers of the language to fulfil the need for general classes in English, let alone provide for more specialised ones. See also 2 (third and following paragraphs).

2.7 Distance learning and open systems of learning, which in Mexico really means part-time education for working people, are expanding rapidly, but English language teaching has rarely been offered in these programmes. See also 2 (second paragraph).

2.8 Radio and television are increasingly used for carrying English language programmes. The audiovisual officer at the Embassy is responsible for distributing English by Radio programmes, which are broadcast on state and local stations. A number of television channels have been interested in buying BBC English by Television programmes; some are scheduled to be shown in 1981. The BBC agent in Mexico is Editoriales Salvat SA.

2.8.1 There have been a number of attempts by Mexican television stations and channels - Telesecundaria in particular - to produce their own English language teaching programmes, but up to now the programmes have not been well produced, and the pedagogical aspects are very suspect. Attempts are being made to improve the programmes, and a native English-speaker has recently been attached to the script-writing team.

3. Teachers of English

The greatest, constant problem for Mexican educational planners is trying to keep pace with the ever-increasing numbers of students; closely allied to it is the need for more and more trained teachers.

3.1 Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, but it is certain that trained teachers of English are in short supply at all levels - chronically so in the secondary schools. It is estimated that only some ten to fifteen per cent of the approximately twelve thousand teachers of English at secondary level have had any formal training in the teaching of English as a foreign language. What makes matters worse is that many teachers at this level have only an extremely limited knowledge of the language. The shortage is so marked that it is impossible for any true selection of English-teaching personnel to take place, and large numbers of teachers who have no real qualifications, aptitude or even desire to teach English end up doing so. The call for more and better teacher-training programmes has come from teachers and administrators alike. In the past few years there has been a gradual but encouraging increase in the number and quality of EFL training programmes offered. The situation is somewhat better in high schools. Since many high-school teachers of English also work at tertiary level, the area is much the best catered for in the public sector. In general, the private sector is much better supplied, for, though salaries may be no higher, hours of work and general working conditions are considerably better than in the public sector.

3.2 Equally, at tertiary level and in the private sector generally, there are many expatriate teachers, principally American, working alongside Mexican teachers who are far more likely to have been trained in the United States or the United Kingdom as well as in Mexico itself. (Legal and political restrictions make it virtually impossible for non-Mexicans to teach in the secondary schools.)

3.3 Teacher-training programmes fall into three main categories:

a. those run by Federal and State authorities;
b. those run by universities;
c. those offered by private institutions.

3.3.1 A recent survey estimated that, of trained EFL teachers working in SEP schools in Mexico some thirty-five per cent had been trained in courses run by Federal and State authorities, thirty-eight per cent in private language schools, ten per cent at universities, and seventeen per cent in various institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

3.3.2 At present there are three Superior Normal Schools (ENS) in the Federal District, and twenty-four in different parts of the Republic. These are the only SEP-recognised teacher-training centres for teachers who wish to teach at secondary level. Their English Departments are responsible for training teachers for secondary and preparatory schools and for the future staff of the ENS themselves.

3.3.3 The best-known ENS was established in Mexico City in 1942, just sixteen years after secondary schools were begun in Mexico. This school offers 'ordinary' courses for teachers working in the Federal District and 'intensive' courses for those outside the metropolitan area. Nearly all the trainees work at primary level when they begin in the ENS; in the 'ordinary' programme they attend courses for half a day four times a week over four years. The 'intensive' courses run for six weeks each summer; teachers have to attend at least six of these courses to obtain their teachers' licence for secondary level and the title of Maestro de Inglés.

3.3.4 The training provided combines a special subject (in this case English) language improvement and teaching methodology with examination of the general aims of Mexican education. Only since 1973 has there been a separate English Department; before that time both English and French came under the Language School.

3.3.5 There have been many attempts to update the methodological and other components in the courses, but even now the courses do not seem to provide many teachers of English who can get good results from students when they go on to teach in secondary schools. There are few non-Mexican staff at the ENS, but they have outside help from British and American sources.

3.3.6 In 1980 there were approximately 250 English trainee teachers taking 'ordinary' courses and 350 the intensive ones at the ENS in Mexico City. Each year some twenty-five to thirty teachers graduate from the former programme and approximately fifty from the latter. Since courses began thirty-eight years ago, less than two thousand teachers (an average of fifty-two a year) have graduated in English. These figures amply illustrate the huge gap between trained-teacher supply and demand at present.

3.3.7 Most of the twenty-four ENS outside the Federal District are smaller and are attached to state universities or privately financed. In general, they offer similar courses, but not many offer 'intensive' programmes.

3.3.8 There are a number of refresher courses and seminars organised by the Bureau of Professional Improvement (Dirección General de Capacitación y Mejoramiento Profesional del Magisterio) within the state system. The Bureau is well staffed but has poor premises and is poorly equipped. It also provides for members of its staff to act as linguistic advisers in various states, and they run in-service courses in provincial centres - a further attempt at decentralisation by SEP.

3.3.9 Courses run by universities were very rare till recently, and even today a relatively small number offer EFL training programmes. Many of the courses are comparatively expensive and long, but a number of universities do not regard EFL teaching as a subject worthy of study at this level. A broad education rather than teacher-training as such is attempted by many of the existing programmes. There tends to be a good deal of emphasis on theory and acquisition of knowledge rather than on improving methodology and actual teaching skills. With a few exceptions, notably a course begun in 1980 at CELE/UNAM) the courses consist mainly of a 'didactics' element built into an English studies course. A number of private universities, particularly the Iberoamericano, Universidad La Salle and the University of the Americas, offer genuine EFL teaching courses. During the presidential campaign of 1976, President Lopez Portillo was asked by teachers to establish a National Pedagogic University (UPN). The University was officially opened in late 1980. It is hoped that this will provide in large measure the answer to Mexico's great need for trained teachers. At present, however, there is no department or provision for English language teacher training; the University will therefore not be able to improve matters in this field in the foreseeable future.

3.3.10 For almost fifty years, private language schools in Mexico have been a vital source of trained EFL teachers. Many institutes offer pre-service and in-service courses which overall tend to be more practically oriented than those already mentioned. There is a wide variety of programmes offered, however, with diverse methodological bases, course contents and emphases. The best courses are offered by the semiofficial British Institutes, ie the Anglo-American Cultural Institute (IAMC) and the American Mexican-North American Cultural Institute (INMRC). None of the courses offered by the private sector has been officially recognised by SEP apart from those of the IAMC branch in Guadalajara which are recognised in the State of Jalisco, but they are well known as among the most useful courses English teachers can take in Mexico at present.

3.4 The only influential ELT teachers' organisation is MEXTESOL, the Mexican affiliate of the parent TESOL organisation in the United States, which began on a small scale in 1973 with chapters in Mexico City and Monterrey. Since then it has grown rapidly: at present there are seventeen regional chapters and over twelve hundred members. It organises many regional miniconventions and chapter meetings throughout the year in various parts of the Republic.

It also has an annual convention at which outstanding Mexican and foreign experts in ELT have participated. Both its quarterly newsletter and its journal are widely distributed. It has the active support of ELT booksellers and publishers' representatives. Perhaps its only weakness is that it has not yet really influenced the Ministry of Education in the direction of improving English language teaching in the public sector. Significantly many of its members work outside the public sector - mostly at the better qualified end of the ELT spectrum. The number of British and American members is high.

4. Materials Support

Most British, American and Mexican EFL books are readily available in the network of English language bookshops in Mexico City as well as in the various provincial cities. Six British publishers have representatives in Mexico. In the public sector, textbooks at secondary level have to be approved by a National Council. Apart from the series Basic Junior ACE, written by a group from the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute and published by Macmillan, the books most often used are written by Mexicans and published locally. The most popular series are:

My First English Book **My Second English Book** **My Third English Book**	(Hess, published by McGraw Hill de México)
World of English	(Zamarron; in three books; published by Fondo Educativo)
English Alive	(Gómez Marqueo Maqueo; published by the Oxford University Press in Mexico).

At higher levels of the public sector and in private institutions the choice of textbooks is much freer: a wide range of British and American texts is used, such as:

Contemporary English	(Macmillan)
In Touch	(published jointly by Longman New York and the North American Cultural Institute)
First Things First	(Longman)
The Mainline Series	"
The Strategies Series	"
Streamline	(Oxford University Press)
Access to English	(Oxford University Press)
Kernel Lessons - Intermediate and Plus	(Longman)
New Horizons in English	(Addison Wesley)
Modern American English	(Regents)
Reading and Thinking	(Oxford University Press)

There is no tax on imported books, but a hundred-per-cent tax is levied on imported tapes, cassettes and the general range of ELT hardware - which makes them very expensive: the result is that very little hardware is imported or used in Mexico, and many publishers and booksellers are forced to reproduce multiple copies of tape materials locally, but these are rarely of a very high quality. A growing number of language laboratories are being installed in the country, many of them presented by the Japanese government, but in general there is little use made of audio or visual aids, apart from wallcharts and tapes. Very few language-teaching films are available except for those which the British Council ELT Resource Centre lends out. (See 6.) The principal institutional sources of EFL materials in Mexico are university language departments, some of which have produced excellent ESP/EAP materials. The main semi-governmental institutes have been very active producers of materials, and the Anglo-Mexican Institute is developing a bank of self-access materials.

5. English outside the Education System

Only since the 1930s has the teaching of English as a foreign language in private elementary schools become widespread. Since the early sixties the number of bilingual Spanish-English elementary schools has grown very considerably. At this level there are now four main categories of school:

a. bilingual kindergartens;
b. bilingual primary schools;
c. bilingual cultural schools;
d. private elementary schools offering English as a foreign language as one of the compulsory subjects.

The number of bilingual kindergartens is growing rapidly. Children at this level increasingly divide their time between Spanish and English as the language they hear from the teacher and begin to use for themselves. Many of the bilingual primary schools have no truly bilingual programme but teach English in effect as a foreign language, often - understandably - with a much heavier emphasis on the Spanish curriculum. The degree of proficiency in English acquired by students attending these schools varies very considerably - depending largely on the school's general attitude and the linguistic ability of individual teachers. Few pupils could be said to be really bilingual. The number of schools in this category is increasing very rapidly indeed - in the provinces as well as in the Federal District.

There are relatively few bilingual-cultural schools, and they are rarely found outside such urban areas as Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Puebla. They are in general very expensive, but the teaching is of a high professional standard. The class size tends to be much smaller than in most Mexican schools; the programmes offered are genuinely bilingual - a complete curriculum in English and Spanish. The schools' aim is to provide a sound elementary education in which the pupils master both languages and cultures fully. The teaching is <u>in</u> English rather than, as elsewhere, <u>of</u> English, and the results on the whole are extremely good. Time devoted to English as a foreign language in private elementary schools varies enormously: it may be as little as one hour a week or as much as one hour a day. Results are uneven - often not very satisfactory, since motivation is generally low and the English-language proficiency of many of the teachers not of a very high standard. Private English language institutes abound in Mexico. Many of them are run on a commercial basis; many are of a very dubious standard - but there is certainly a great need to supplement the English teaching offered by the state system, and the better ones' role, especially in the following areas, is vital:

a. provision of general English classes for students of school age, who do not really learn much English as such while attending classes provided by the state;

b. general English classes for large numbers of adult students who either never had the opportunity to learn English earlier or, again, need to remedy the low level of proficiency they acquired at school;

c. more specialised English classes for adults who need English in their jobs in fields like tourism, banking, international trade, and technology such classes, at present in their infancy, being expected to become of major importance in Mexico in the eighties;

d. provision of a wide range of in-service teacher-training courses for English teachers in all areas. Here the better private institutes lead the way, providing vastly more practical programmes than those offered in state institutions.

The teaching of English in the private sector in general is much better than within the state education system. Without many of the good private schools and institutes, the general picture of English in Mexico would undoubtedly be much worse than it actually is.

6. British Support for the Teaching of English

6.1 There is one British Council English Language Officer based in Mexico City, the third to have been posted there. Over the past decade the emphasis in ELT support has gradually moved away from secondary level (1970 to 1976) to much greater concentration on tertiary level (1977 to 1979). At present a combination of support at both levels obtains, but with greater emphasis on the tertiary.

6.1.1 Official British support for ELT in Mexico at present involves the following elements in combination:

A jointly financed (Mexican and Overseas Development Administration) Key English Language Teaching Scheme (ODA and KELT). In 1979 this was conceived as a five-post programme at secondary and tertiary levels, but ODA's subsequent insistence on full in-country costs for KELT posts provided by the host institutions, when other countries subsidise their language-teaching projects, seemed to the Mexican Ministry of Education to demonstrate a lack of commitment on the part of the British Government to academic collaboration: the KELT scheme is therefore being reduced to two posts at tertiary level, both to continue work previously done by Council-appointed experts in formula ELT posts.

6.1.2 Post 1: Professorship of Applied Linguistics at CELE/UNAM
Dr Tony Shaw, a Council officer, has held this post since July 1980. The principal duties are: advising and teaching on the MA in Applied Linguistics and teacher-training courses; participation in research projects; and acting as consultant on materials design and course-development projects.

6.1.3 Post 2: Lectureship in ESP Materials Writing and Teacher Training An ESP expert is expected to fill this post from August 1981. The main work will extend EAP materials already produced there (with more on evaluation and exit level) and to train the teachers in using them effectively.

6.1.3 National English Language Teaching Resources Centre A locally appointed English Language Assistant (ELA), Fred Rogers, started work on setting up a centre in February 1980; in the following June it was opened.

The Centre is housed in part of the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute's library, and thanks to their help and the generosity of many ELT publishers and others concerned, as well as funds for equipment provided by British Council Headquarters, it now has an excellent selection of English language materials and research papers. Sections range from English literature and the whole spectrum of EFL teaching materials to linguistics. There is a full range of equipment and software for sound, film and video. This is provided, along with advice on its use from the Centre, to students and teachers of English throughout the Republic. The Centre is the only one of its kind in Mexico. More and more, the two Council-appointed ELT staff in the Mexico City office are using the Centre as a resource base from which to run seminars and workshops (they gave over forty in 1980) in areas including English for special purposes, the use of language laboratories, reading strategies and materials, the application of discourse analysis to ELT, student-centred learning and a wide range of classroom teaching techniques. Future plans include an ODA-financed course in the use of video in teacher training for mid 1981, the national ESP survey, and the development of materials-writing projects in collaboration with Mexican teachers.

6.1.4. The British Council and the Anglo-Mexican Institute came to an agreement in February 1981 to provide teacher training in ESP and courses for students as required by government organisations and others. This joint venture is seen as essentially fitting in with the much needed general development of courses in English for occupational purposes (ECP) and as part of the Council's overall move towards Paid Educational Services (PES) and Client-Funded Activity (CFA) in Mexico. The Council will be responsible for the promotion of courses, teacher training, syllabus design, materials production and monitoring of students' progress, and the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute will provide the teachers and teaching facilities. It is envisaged that this area will become a major part of British ELT work in Mexico in the next few years.

6.1.5 Over a period of two years or so a close link has been built up between the Open University Systems (SUA) Department of English within the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at UNAM and the University of Veracruz at Xalapa and the Social Sciences and Humanities Division of ITESM in Monterrey. (See Literature Annex for further details.)

6.1.6 Identification and support for all worthwhile ELT/ESP programmes (including teacher training and technical education) involves holding seminars and workshops, provision of materials, and advice to teachers and organisers of projects in many parts of the country.

6.1.7 The Davies Test has recently been replaced by the new English Language Tests. The Council organises monthly sessions largely to test students who hope to follow postgraduate courses in the United Kingdom.

6.1.8 ELO is one of the RSA assessors in Mexico for the certificate in teaching English as a foreign language; the other two are directors of the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute. ELO and a number of AMCI teachers are also the oral examiners for the Cambridge First Certificate and Proficiency examinations organised at the AMCI in Mexico City. He is also liaison officer for support to the three English-medium schools in Mexico (Greengates, Edron Academy and Lancaster School), Chairman of the Academic Committee for the 1981 Mextesol Convention, and local monitor for the newly established MA in Applied Linguistics course offered by Birmingham University. In collaboration with the British Council Books and Libraries Officer, he helps British ELT publishers by:

a. displaying their materials and catalogues at the ELT Resource Centre;

b. organising ELT book exhibitions and presentations;

c. identifying gaps in published materials in Mexico and assessing potential markets and products from British publishers;

d. belonging to the ELT publishers' committee in Mexico.

6.1.9 Each year the British Council sponsors some ten teachers of English to attend BC/ELT summer schools as well as helping teachers to take postgraduate courses in Applied Linguistics through providing scholarships and Hornby Trust awards. The Council is also organising and expanding a language assistants' exchange programme.

6.2 There are three private English language schools in Mexico with strong British connexions and a large percentage of British-trained and British-recruited staff.

6.2.1 The Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute, much the oldest, largest and best established - and the only one operating as a non-profitmaking cultural association - at present employs a total staff of some four hundred and has seven branches (four in Mexico City and one each in Puebla, Guadalajara and Monterrey). There are altogether about twenty-two thousand students. Minor benefit contracts for John D Shepherd MA, OBE (Director-General), Walter Plumb, OBE (Director of the Satellite Branch) and Paul Davies, MA (Director of the Puebla branch) expire in July 1981 and will not be renewed.

6.2.2 The Cambridge School of English (1977) is a small branch of the school of the same name in London, and all its teachers are brought out from the United Kingdom.

6.2.3 The Instituto Britannia de México (1975) now has some forty staff and some two thousand students. Like the AMCI, the school offers teacher-training programmes

All the schools mentioned here offer a wide range of general English classes both to children and adults and help considerably to fill gaps left in English teaching provided under the Mexican education system.

6.3 The overall aims of official British support for ELT in Mexico can be summed up as to generate goodwill and, wherever possible, revenue - through Anglo-Mexican interaction in ELT - by ensuring that:

a. the standard of ELT is improved at all levels and in all sectors;

b. appropriate postgraduate studies are developed;

c. appropriate in-service training and materials-writing programmes are developed;

d. the English required for technological/professional studies and occupations is improved;

e. Mexican interest in paying for ELT courses and services is stimulated through services offered by the British Council and/or the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute;

f. the professional standing of the Council as a major ELT organisation is demonstrated;

g. teaching and courses are adequate for making English literature accessible to Mexican students where appropriate;

h. the abovementioned are supported by the interchange of British and Mexican personnel.

6.4 In April 1979 Mexico hosted the second Regional ESP Conference held in Latin America. This was organised by the British Council and attended by ELOs and delegations from nine Latin American countries as well as from the United Kingdom and the United States. Professor John Sinclair, Christopher Candlin and Dick Allwright were among the British participants.

6.4.1 The Council helps to sponsor visits from British ELT experts to Mexico. Recent visitors have included Christopher Candlin, Michael Breen and Gill Sturtridge in 1979 and Alan Maley, Brian Abbs, Roger Bowers, Chris Brumfit, Peter Viney and John and Brita Haycraft in 1980. Professor Henry Widdowson, Leo Jones and Joan Tough have been invited to the 1981 Mextesol Convention.

7. American Support for the Teaching of English

At government level the Americans still keep a very low profile in ELT in Mexico, largely for political reasons.

7.1 There is no equivalent to the British Council ELO, but there are the Academic Programmes Coordinator within the United States International Communications Agency (USICA), who estimates that she spends about ten per cent of her time coordinating the work of the fifteen binational language centres and in distributing the various USICA/ELT publications, the most important of which is the quarterly ELT journal Forum, three thousand copies of which are distributed free in Mexico, and two consultants in ELT at the USICA headquarters who are responsible for the whole of Latin America and travel out of Washington. The consultant who visits Mexico does so principally at the request of various binational centres and spends most of his time in teacher training at the binational centres.

7.2 The USICA provides an annual grant for Mextesol, largely to support the sending of speakers to regional conventions in various parts of Mexico.

7.3 The binational centres are not financed in any way by the American government: they are autonomous cultural associations (like the AMCI). Some three years ago they decided to form their own association. There are about forty thousand students of English at the centres at present.

7.4 American influence is strong at numerous bilingual schools at primary level; the best of them takes the lead in teaching developments at this level in Mexico.

7.5 Anglo-American relations in ELT are cordial thanks to the work of such organisations as Mextesol, American ELT bookshops, publishers' committees and personal contacts; but there is no 'official' cooperation nor are there any joint projects.

8. Current Research

The very heavy teaching loads of teachers and the general belief of administrators that a teacher's job is to be in front of a group of students do not produce a particularly conducive climate for research in ELT in Mexico - low on the list of research priorities in any case and with little money devoted to it. The only area where research has been done is at universities, but even there the need to provide materials, train teachers and teach students often takes precedence. The most notable work has been carried out at CELE/UNAM, where the Research and Development Unit, now the Department of Applied Linguistics, has produced thirteen extremely useful research reports, largely in ESP, between 1975 and 1978. So far, the main areas of research have been needs analysis and materials development, student and materials evaluation, research in reading strategies, and problems in reading comprehension. The Department began the first MA programme in Applied Linguistics in 1979. It hopes to be bringing out the first volume of its own applied linguistics journal in 1981. Research in reading comprehension is also in progress at the private Universidad Iberoamericano, where the interesting experiment of comparing reading comprehension in English and translation from English to Spanish, using ninety students of chemical engineering and nutrition as the subjects of research, was carried out. In similar areas work is in progress at the three campuses of the Metropolitan University - with the addition of language acquisition and learning strategies (in conjunction with Brunel University (England) and CRAPEL (France)). Practical research in syllabus design and materials preparation is carried out at the AMCI, where various experiments with student listening laboratories and selfaccess materials are conducted. Much less time is devoted to ELT research in the provinces - with the exception of Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM), where interesting work is being done both in second-language acquisition and in the development of various testing and evaluation techniques. In general, what research is done is well planned and executed, but a great deal more needs to be developed in all areas, particularly in EAP and EOP, essential to the future ELT needs of secondary and tertiary students in Mexico.

9. General Statement

Spanish is, of course, Mexico's official language, and Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in Latin America, with an estimated seventy million people. It is a politically stable country with a high gross national product compared to other developing countries but with considerable rural and urban poverty largely owing to the unequal distribution of wealth. It is a country rich in natural resources, particularly oil and gas, with a reasonably diversified economy, that, nevertheless, faces a potential crisis brought on by its rapidly growing population, expected to exceed a hundred million or more by the end of this century. Mexico is thus engaged in a race

between population growth and social and economic development. For further background information and the general setting within which English is taught, see 1.

9.1 The main strengths and weaknesses of the present ELT situation. See 1.

9.2 Concerning English for special purposes, over the past six or seven years in particular this subject in Mexico, as in many other countries, has developed rapidly at tertiary level in response to students' multiplying requests for 'instrumental' rather than 'descriptive' satisfaction in their English language courses. Much of the work being done in Mexico is in the main stream of ESP development worldwide, but the following aspects are particularly noticeable:

9.2.1 Of the various branches or options within the overall framework of ESP, Mexico has so far, for good reason, heavily concentrated on EAP - specifically the area of reading and reading comprehension courses for students of a whole range of subjects other than English at tertiary level. A good deal of material has been produced, some of it published, and much of it bears favourable comparison with materials produced in this field anywhere in the world. The principal centres of materials production are:

a. CELE/UNAM (a wide range of reading comprehension and other courses for faculties including law, architecture, veterinary medicine, sociology etc).

b. The Language Departments at all three campuses of the Metropolitan University (UAM). The materials produced by the Xochimilco campus - largely on reading comprehension - have been published by McGraw-Hill under the following titles:

Common Core
Social Sciences and Humanities
Biological and Health Sciences
Arts and Sciences for Design

c. The Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM), where a course (self-access on the whole) on **Reading English for Academic Purposes** has been published. The materials were developed and written largely by Michael Scott, who held an ELT/BC post here between 1978 and 1980.

d. The Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon (UANL) at Monterrey where materials similar to those in use at ITESM were produced by Michael Scott and his Mexican colleagues. Longman will soon be publishing these.

9.2.2 ESP work at present is almost confined to the tertiary level, ESP being used in Mexico as a medicine to cure an illness once the illness has been diagnosed; for no 'preventive medicine' approach has yet appeared on the horizon in the later stages of secondary education. (Cf Chile).

9.2.3 The corollary of the excellent work in EAP is that the field of English for occupational purposes (EOP) is virtually unexplored. Mexico badly needs people trained in English for jobs in tourism, banking, international trade, various jobs as technicians, the

petrochemical industry etc., as well as for specialist academic studies. Courses at present in those areas are almost totally inadequate; and, as university language departments lack the staff and resources to cope with the new challenge, EOP will almost certainly become an increasingly important component of ELT courses offered in the private sector.

9.2.4 Expertise in ESP is concentrated almost entirely in the metropolitan area; there is an obvious and growing need both of EAP and EOP courses in the provinces. Although places like ITESM in Monterrey, the ITR in Merida, and various university departments in Xalapa and Merida, for example, try hard to develop ESP courses, the fact remains that they are all in need of help from foreign experts or from Mexicans working in the capital. Somehow, perhaps through more in-service seminars and greater exchange of information and personnel, the knowledge of those who work in the major language departments of the universities in the capital has to be disseminated among the provincial cities.

9.2.5 The following are likely to become crucial needs for ESP development in Mexico:

a. Teacher-training courses. At present no specifically ESP-oriented pre-service courses exist. There is a parallel need for considerable expansion in in-service training.

b. Development of more materials (or adaptation of existing ones) in all areas - particularly, perhaps, those of the self-access variety in view of the already chronic shortage of trained teachers.

9.2.6 A need for evaluation of materials produced and of the relative success of various ESP programmes.

9.2.7 A great deal more research in ESP (teaching, reading strategies etc).

9.2.8 A need for much closer cooperation between university and other language departments as well as for more interchange of personnel and materials. Here the British Council is helping in two particular ways:

a. The ELT Resource Centre is the major reference and distribution point for ESP materials in Mexico.

b. ODA has provided the money for a full ESP survey to be carried out in the second half of 1981 to find out what the real ESP situation is in the language departments of Mexico's 69 universities and 45 Regional Technological Institutes (ITRs). From the information collected, it should be possible to plan future ESP development on a much more rational and less haphazard basis than at present.

GLOSSARY

ANUIES	Asociacion Nacional de Universidades e Institutos de Ensenanza Superior (National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Studies)
CELE	Centro de Ensenanza de Lenguas Extranjeras (Foreign Language Study Centre)
ENEP	Escuela Nacional de Estudios Profesionales (National School for Professional Studies)
ENS	Escuela Normal Superior (Higher Teacher Training College)
EST	Escuela Secundaria Tecnica (Technical Secondary School)
IAMC	Instituto Anglo-Mexicano de Cultura (Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute)
INMRC	Instituto Norteamericano-Mexicano de Relaciones Culturales (North-American-Mexican Institute for Cultural Relations)
IPN	Instituto Politecnico Nacional (National Polytechnic Institute)
ITESM	Instituto Tecnologico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Technological Institute for Higher Studies in Monterrey)
ITR	Instituto Tecnologico Regional (Regional Technological Institute)
SELEX	Seccion de Ensenanza de Lenguas Extranjeras (Foreign Language Study Section)
SEP	Secretaria de Educacion Publica (Ministry of Education)
SUA	Sistema de Universidad Abierta (Open University System)
UAM	Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (Metropolitan University)
UANL	Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon (Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon)
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (National Autonomous University of Mexico)
UPN	Universidad Pedagogica Nacional (National Pedagogic University)

LITERATURE ANNEX

1. Status of Literature

In Mexico there is a general lack of reading habits; certainly the field of English Literature is very little developed. Not surprisingly it is not taught at secondary level, and most students arrive at university ill prepared both culturally and linguistically for the study of this subject. The low standard of English makes it very difficult for students to deal even with simple literary texts, and they have little realistic concept of the history of European culture and society.

1.1 Most teaching conditions are uncongenial and students are often submitted to long hours of passive listening to lectures, the subject usually being approached through a rather boring historical survey of English literature - probably beginning with Chaucer.

1.2 No real provision is made for the training of university teachers of English literature, and library facilities are very inadequate to provide students with even a reasonable range of important texts. Teachers are often appointed through contacts rather than through merit or a genuine interest in the subject. There is little effort to improve this gloomy situation - except in the places mentioned under the later section of the British Council's involvement in this field in Mexico, and many teachers seem to simply give up in the face of these considerable difficulties.

1.3 The only places - other than those which the British Council has directly encouraged - where English Literature teaching is at all active and promising are the various private language schools - particularly at the AMCI, where students are carefully prepared to take the Cambridge Proficiency and Diploma examinations. At such institutes they also show films of Shakespeare's plays etc, and they have been able to have exhibitions on topics like Lawrence and his time, besides the very successful Shakespeare exhibition shown in Mexico in 1979 and 1980.

1.4 The Anglo-Mexican cultural festival in mid 1980 included a successful production in Spanish of King Richard III - the play was performed by the Mexican National Theatre, directed by Clifford Williams and with sets and costumes designed by Abdel Farrah.

2. British Council involvement in English Literature Programmes

2.1 The first in-depth attempt to look at the situation on the ground was made by Dr Ken Churchill from the British Council Literature Department in London who visited Mexico in December 1978. Dr Churchill's report emphasized that any programme in this field set up by the Council should be modest and aimed at gradual localised improvement of standards.

2.2 Dr Churchill found a few encouraging signs of people within the system who were anxious to work in this direction and eager for help from Britain rather than from the United States, where the universities have had very little impact on literary studies in Mexico.

2.3 Perhaps the most common request from all Mexican university departments the Council has contact with is for the provision of materials. In the ELT Resource Centre there is an extensive range of literary study aids, slide packs, Writers and their Work, Notes on

Literature etc. - and these are increasingly being borrowed from the Centre. The AMCI Library also has a quite substantial English Literature section.

2.4 The following programme has been developed since Dr Churchill's visit:

2.4.1 Much the most advanced centre of English studies in Mexico is within the Open University System (SUA) of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the National University (UNAM), and a close link has now been made between this group under the direction of Mr Colin White and the University of East Anglia in the UK. This link has consisted of the following main elements:

a. British Council funded visits from Professor Malcolm Bradbury, in March 1979 and from Professor John Broadbent (Dean of the School of British and American Studies at UEA) in November 1979. The first of these visits was essentially to follow up the exploratory work done by Dr Churchill. Professor Broadbent looked more closely at the syllabuses, the materials used, and particularly the methodologies employed at UNAM.

b. A further visit of a month was undertaken by George Hyde (a lecturer at UEA) in December 1980; he spent his time teaching students and working closely with the teachers in the Department at UNAM.

c. UEA received a member of the UNAM teaching staff on their MA in Literature course in 1979/80; a second teacher is currently at UEA and a third will be going in October 1981. All these MA programmes have been sponsored by British Council scholarships. When the teachers return to Mexico they should greatly improve the teaching, which at present relies very heavily on the dedicated and expert work of Colin White.

d. A further visit from a member of the UEA staff is probable in 1981/82 - this time being envisaged as a teaching attachment for a semester in Mexico.

2.5 Professor Bradbury also visited the small but active English Literature Unit within the Division of Science and Humanities at ITESM in Monterrey. Here the Council have helped by supplying materials to them, and one of their staff was given a British Council scholarship to attend the summer Literature Studies Seminar held at Cambridge in 1980.

2.6 Professor Broadbent visited the English Department and opened a Shakespeare exhibition at the University of Veracruz in Xalapa. Here there is no really active teaching of literature going on, and the Council can do little more than supply the Department with support materials when requested.

3. Conclusion

For the future, the British Council will probably be able to give active support only to the excellent link established between the SUA group at UNAM and UEA in the UK. The future of this link depends on the Mexican University's ability to finance - at least partly - any further visits from UEA staff, as up to the present (February 1981) all costs have been covered by the British Council.

It is unlikely that the teaching of English Literature in Mexico is going to expand or improve dramatically in the near future. The continued support of the British Council in the ways described in this Annex should however provide the possibility for continued gradual improvement at least in the most important and only really developed centre for English literature teaching in the country.